



EPA Wants Public Input on Three Draft Discharge Permits and Variances for Silver Valley Wastewater Treatment Plants

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is now accepting comments on three draft National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permits and variances for wastewater treatment plants (WWTPs) in the Silver Valley. Two permits are to the South Fork Coeur d'Alene River Sewer District for discharges from the Page WWTP and Mullan WWTP. The third permit is to the City of Smelterville for discharge from its WWTP.

NPDES permits are required under the Clean Water Act for all point sources discharging pollutants into waters of the United States. These permits update the facilities' existing wastewater permits.

Variances from Water Quality Proposed

EPA is proposing variances for the WWTPs which will allow them to continue discharging cadmium, lead and zinc at current levels for five years. The variances are proposed because EPA and the State of Idaho determined that if the facilities were required to meet current water quality standards it would result in a substantial economic and social burden to the communities.

Written comments will be accepted on the permits and variances until October 15, 2002. EPA will consider all comments before reissuing the final permits and issuing the metals variances. Comments on permits and/or the variances should be addressed to: Office of Water Director at U.S. EPA, Region 10, 1200 Sixth Avenue, OW-130, Seattle, WA 98101. Please indicate whether you are commenting on the permits, variances or both.

A public hearing will be held on October 1, 2002, for the purpose of accepting oral comments on the permits and variances. The hearing will begin at 6:00 p.m. at Silver Hills Middle School in Osburn, Idaho. A sign-in process will be used for people wishing to make a statement or submit written comments at the hearing.

The draft permits, supporting fact sheets, draft variances, and supporting documents are available for review on EPA's website www.epa.gov/r10earth/water.htm and at:

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(208) 769-1422

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(208) 752-4571

For information about the draft permits, contact Kelly Huynh, at 206-553-8414; for information about the draft variances, contact Lisa Macchio, at 206-553-1834; for general information, contact

Marianne Deppman at 1-800-424-4372, extension 1237.